

The Hungry Horse News  
May 22, 1970

# Columbia Falls Plant in Jeopardy If Pollution Proposals Go Through

Tribune Capitol Bureau

HELENA — The Anaconda Co. Thursday threatened to close its huge Columbia Falls reduction works if the state adopts new emission regulations for aluminum plants.

The issue has divided the industrial city of 2,600 near the entrance to Glacier Park.

Opposing the proposed standards which would reduce fluoride emissions to 864 pounds a day from the 600 aluminum making pots, were Mayor Roger H. Elliott, Howard Austin, local Chamber of Commerce president and Donald Everett, Anaconda Co. vice president for operations.

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Endorsing the standards. dur-

ing the hearing conducted in the capitol by the State Board of Health, were two members of the Flathead chapter of Gals Against Smog and Pollution (GASP), Dr. Loren Kreck, member of the Flathead Pollution Council and Dr. C. C. Gordon, University of Montana environmental scientist.

The Gaspers brought boxes of tree limbs, which they said had needle and leaf damage from the fluorides.

At one point there was an exchange between Everett and Board of Health Member R. C. Ritter, Bozeman.

Everett explained that Anaconda had purchased some of the land where damage was heaviest from the emissions.

"You can't buy Glacier," Ritter snapped.

The environment must be protected. Elliott said, but meeting the standards "would price them (Anaconda) out of the aluminum market." The mayor said he doubted that the fluorides were injurious to humans.

Everett said that "conditions in or around the plant pose no danger to human health, nor does the eating of lettuce or other food grown near the plant pose any such problems.

"Claims of widespread devastation in Glacier Park are false."

He said there were problems in starting the last two of the 120-cell potlines during 1969, but that "fume control will continue to improve substantially in the next two years."

Everett said that the state's fluorides standards in the air surrounding an emission source, already in effect, "should prove to be more than adequate."

The company is spending \$1 million, Everett said, to reduce emissions put out last summer by two-thirds within two years. The proposed new emissions standards would mean testing 30 stacks and about 100,000 square feet of open ground, he said.

It has been suggested, he said, that the plant could convert the present process to a pre-bake process which would cost \$80 million, and it would make it easier

to spend that money in building a larger second plant in the Ohio Valley than we are now contemplating building there."

Installation of scrubbers to catch emissions going through the plant's roof would cost \$13 to \$16 million and be prohibitive to maintain, he said.

Kreck said that Anaconda is still trying to maintain Montana in a "colony status" and said he hoped that May 21 could be "marked as the day the Board of Health gave clean air to the people of Montana."

Mrs. Marle Brown, Columbia Falls GASP member, said "we as individuals no longer burn our garbage, why should the aluminum plant be allowed to dump their garbage in the form of dirty air into the atmosphere?"

She asked the board to close two of the plant's potlines until proper pollution control equipment is installed.

Disagreeing with the Anaconda Co. official, she said, "Any poison that can damage vegetation can damage human tissue."

Gordon said that the taxes and payrolls paid by the company would "never pay the ecological bills."

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Tribune

5/22/70